

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Transportation



Public Roundtable on
“Implementation of 5G Small Cell Technology in the District”

Testimony of
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Before the
Committee on Transportation and the Environment
Mary M. Cheh, Chairperson
Council of the District of Columbia

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Room 412

John A. Wilson Building 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Good morning, Chairperson Cheh, members, and staff of the Committee. I am Jeff Marootian, Director of the District Department of Transportation, or DDOT. I am pleased to testify before you today on behalf of Mayor Bowser regarding the implementation of 5G Small Cell Technology. We have sought to create an open, transparent, and iterative process to produce our draft Small Cell guidelines, and we welcome this roundtable as another opportunity to hear feedback from the public and the Council as we facilitate this process.

Public Space

Our public space enhances the quality of life for our residents and visitors and ensures that the District has the foundation to become a more accessible and sustainable city. DDOT, along with other local and national agencies, is a steward of the District's public space - a resource that is both valuable and finite. As the Nation's Capital, we have a unique responsibility to protect public space. When the District was approached by telecommunications companies with a new type of request to utilize our public space for Small Cell Technology, we started a process of extensive research and outreach.

Small Cell Technology

Small Cell Technology is the shorthand phrase we use to describe the wireless telecommunication antennae and equipment needed to increase capacity for 4th Generation (4G) technology and enable the eventual deployment of 5th Generation (5G) technology. To ensure a high level of quality coverage and connectivity for the District, this equipment needs to be deployed widely and in close proximity to users on the ground. This is especially true in dense urban environments that create noise or interference with both 4G and 5G technology. Small Cell Technology is currently being installed in cities around the country, as well as abroad. We

looked to early adopters, such as Denver and Boston, to help us develop appropriate guidelines to implement this technology in the District..

Guidelines

The Draft Small Cell Design Guidelines released by DDOT in August 2018 set forth supplemental requirements and specifications for the placement and design of Small Cell infrastructure within the public right of way. The guidelines are supplemental to a number of existing local and federal regulations and fit within the broad parameters established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). They are the product of interagency collaboration with the Office of Planning (OP) and the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), and staff input from the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). The guidelines are intended to support Small Cell technology deployment while preserving the distinct character of the District and protecting accessibility in the public space.

The Guidelines generally address the appearance of the equipment and the installation, location, placement within the streetscape, and the frequency of placement of Small Cell technology. They explicitly protect Americans with Disabilities Act requirements to ensure that District streets are accessible to all users and protect historic locations and view sheds to ensure the city's heritage is preserved. They explicitly protect street trees to ensure the city stays green and enable the current progress and future goals for tree canopy coverage.

Process for Permitting

In order for an entity to install Small Cell technology in the District's Right of Way, providers will be required to execute the Master License Agreement for District of Columbia Use of Public Right of Way (MLA). The MLA is required prior to seeking a public space permit, and it includes multiple provisions that establish conditions, requirements, and limitations on the

MLA holder and any Small Cell infrastructure installed in the District. Currently, there are five MLA holders in the District: Verizon, Crown Castle, AT&T, Mobilitie and ExteNet.

Through the Small Cell program, the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) is partnering with Small Cell providers to include installation of OCTO's Wireless Access Points in targeted locations. OCTO has worked closely to ensure this technology will increase coverage and connectivity that spurs economic growth in the District, the innovation of businesses, and furthers the education of District residents. OCTO will also serve as reviewers for all public space permits for small cell technology.

Public Process & Next Steps

In creating these draft guidelines, we sought to be transparent about the process and provide opportunities for public input. The process for the Notice of Availability of Master License Agreements included three open meetings in November and December of 2017 and, most recently, in April 2018. More broadly, an initial public meeting to describe the permitting process for installation of small cell facilities was held in May, and when the guidelines were published in August, we made sure to not only have the required notice published in the DC Register, but also sent certified letters and emails to all Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs). We also did outreach to Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Community Improvement District (CIDs) to encourage more feedback.

Further, we hosted two meetings to provide more information to ANC commissioners on small cell installations. After the draft guidelines were published, the Public Space Committee held a public meeting on October 15 to review them publicly. During an eight hour public meeting, more than 40 people submitted comments and lasted for more than eight hours.

Today's Public Roundtable has also provided us with even more feedback to consider as we continue working to improve the guidelines.

We expect to take this feedback and publish updated guidelines before the end of the calendar year, adhering to our previous standard of public notice, including publication in the DC Register and on the DDOT website, sending certified letters and emails to all ANCs, and allowing for another 30 business days for feedback and comment to the Public Space Committee. We will continue to work with our partners at NCPC and CFA with the shared goal of protecting the Nation's distinct character. We will also reconvene the Public Space Committee for a public hearing before any draft guidelines are adopted as final.

In closing, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today, and I look forward to continuing to improve our Small Cell guidelines to produce the best outcome for the District. Lastly, I want to specifically thank the DDOT staff who have worked tirelessly to produce these guidelines by working closely with their colleagues in other agencies, the Small Cell providers, other municipalities, and the public. I am available for any questions you may have.